

Appl. No. June 6, 2005
Reply Dated June 6, 2005
Reply to Office action of March 4, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Original): In a center beam railcar comprising a deck, bulkheads at opposite ends of the railcar, and a center beam extending longitudinally of the railcar and including a center sill, a top chord, and an intermediate structure connecting the top chord and the center sill, the center beam having a height greater than or equal to that of the bulkhead, the improvement wherein the top chord has a width that is not substantially greater than the width of said intermediate structure.

Claim 2 (Original): The improvement of claim 1 wherein said top chord is of a generally rectangular, tubular configuration.

Claim 3 (Original): The improvement of claim 1 wherein said top chord is of generally square tubular configuration.

Claim 4 (Original): The improvement of claim 1 wherein said deck includes a depressed central portion.

Claim 5 (Original): The improvement of claim 4 wherein said railcar has a clear loading height of at least about 14 ft. above said depressed central portion of said deck.

Claim 6 (Original): The improvement of claim 4 wherein said railcar is capable of carrying at least about 110 tons of wood products having a density of about 30 lbs./cu. ft. without exceeding the AAR Plate F Clearances.

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Claim 7 (Original): The improvement of claim 1 wherein the deck includes first and second end portions at a first elevation and a depressed central portion at a second elevation, each of the end portion having a length equal to an integral multiple of the length of a standard product to be carried by said deck.

Claim 8 (Original): The improvement of claim 7 wherein said first elevation is above said second elevation by a dimension approximately equal to the height of a product to be carried in said depressed central portion.

Claim 9 (Original): The improvement of claim 8 further comprising elongated flexible members for securing the lading, and longitudinally adjustable winches for securing said elongated flexible members.

Claim 10 (Original): The improvement of claim 9 wherein said railcar further comprises a pair of side sills, and wherein said winches are supported on one of the side sills, and the elongated flexible members are of sufficient length to extend from said winches over the lading and top chord to the opposite side sill when the car is fully loaded, and wherein said railcar further includes retaining means on the opposite side sill to secure the free ends of the elongated flexible members.

Claim 11 (Original): The improvement of claim 10 wherein said intermediate structure includes a plurality of posts, and further includes, at each end, one or more elongated structural supports connecting one or more of the posts to a respective one of the bulkheads, and wherein said elongated structural supports are not connected to the center sill or the top chord.

Claims 12-15 (Canceled).

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Claim 16 (Original): In a center beam railcar having an elongated flexible member connected to the railcar to secure the lading on the railcar deck, the improvement comprising a longitudinally adjustable retainer to secure an end of the elongated flexible member to the railcar.

Claim 17 (Original): The improvement of claim 16 wherein said longitudinally adjustable retainer comprises a winch.

Claim 18 (Original): The improvement of claim 17 wherein said elongated flexible member comprises a 4 ½ inch wide strap.

Claim 19 (Original): In a center beam railcar comprising a center beam including a center sill, a top chord, and a plurality of posts extending between the center sill and the top chord, a pair of bulkheads at opposite ends of the center beam, and one or more load-supporting surfaces between the bulkheads, the improvement comprising one or more posts, and which are not connected to said center sill or to said top chord.

Claim 20 (Original): The improvement of claim 19 wherein each of said one or more structural supports extends substantially horizontally between said bulkhead and said one or more posts.